

BUILDING STRONG READERS

IN SANB

At St. Anthony-New Brighton Schools, building strong readers is a shared priority across our schools, and the work continues to deepen.

Across the district, literacy instruction is grounded in research-based practices aligned with the Science of Reading. These approaches focus on helping students build foundational skills in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, ensuring they have the tools to read with confidence.

“Strong literacy instruction requires intentionality and a shared commitment to student outcomes,” said Matt Menier, Director of Principal Leadership and Learning. “Across our schools, teachers and leaders are working together to strengthen practices and ensure every student builds a solid foundation in reading.”

The implementation of Minnesota’s Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act has provided an opportunity to strengthen this work. Teachers are engaged in required training, with dedicated time built into their schedules to support both learning and application in the classroom.

In classrooms, teachers are putting these practices into action. They use a combination of a comprehensive literacy curriculum and targeted strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Foundational skills are taught explicitly, while students also build understanding through reading, writing, and discussion.

“Our teachers are approaching this work with dedication and purpose,” said Tom Lee, Wilshire Park Interim Principal. “They are working to connect foundational skills with deeper comprehension, and we are seeing students take a more systematic approach to reading. The work is rigorous, and our students are rising to the challenge.”

Instructional coaching also plays an important role. Coaches work alongside teachers to refine lessons, analyze student progress, and adjust instruction in real time. This supports new learning and shifts in practice.

“We are working in close partnership with our teachers, dedicating time to plan, reflect, and strengthen instruction together,” said Jaimee Stanley, District Literacy Coordinator. “That collaboration helps ensure we are using evidence-based practices that support strong outcomes for students.”

The work is being implemented over time, with teacher training occurring in phases aligned with state requirements. This approach helps ensure changes are meaningful and sustainable, while maintaining a strong focus on student outcomes.

At its core, literacy instruction in SANB goes beyond meeting requirements. It is about ensuring every student develops the skills and confidence to succeed as a reader.

How Literacy Instruction is Evolving in SANB



Focused on foundational skills

Students receive explicit instruction in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.



Aligned with the Science of Reading

Instruction reflects research-based practices that support how students learn to read.



Phased teacher training

Teachers are completing READ Act training over time, aligned with state requirements.



Built into the school day

Dedicated time is provided for teachers to complete training and apply it in classrooms.



Support for all learners

Instruction is designed to meet students where they are, with targeted support when needed.

St. Anthony  New Brighton
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Focused Support, Stronger Results

At St. Anthony-New Brighton Schools, learning is about more than completing assignments and taking tests. It’s about helping students understand their progress, build confidence, and develop skills they will use beyond the classroom.

That focus on learning and support is making a difference across the district, including at St. Anthony Village High School (SAVHS), where the impact is evident.

“In the first semester, our staff made a commitment to change the trajectory for some of our students,” said SAVHS Interim Principal Conn McCartan. “We focused on helping students who were not earning credit-bearing grades get to a place where they could.”

By the end of the semester, students receiving failing grades dropped by nearly threefold, while the number earning As and Bs increased by four percent. According to McCartan, the results “reinforced the fact that focusing on our most challenged learners benefits all learners.”

This work is showing up in meaningful ways. SAVHS students engage in discussions that ask them to think critically, explain their reasoning, and learn from one another. Students lead projects and participate in peer critiques, while others apply their learning through research, writing, and problem-solving. The focus is on building deeper understanding and strong communication skills.

At St. Anthony Middle School (SAMS), teachers are helping students better understand how they learn by making expectations and progress more visible.

“We’ve been focusing on making the path more visible for students, and it’s starting to pay off,” said SAMS Effective Instruction Coach Laura Guerrero.

SAMS students reflect on their progress and identify what to work on next, while teachers adjust instruction in real time. This often includes small groups working on specific skills, while another educator circulates to provide immediate feedback, helping students stay engaged and advance their learning.

“In math, my teacher is very direct about what I need to work on now and what to work on next,” said 8th grader Kareem Al-Hammouri. “I like that she sits with me and walks me through the steps toward proficiency.”

This approach also strengthens instruction. “Learning progressions help me plan instruction to support each student and move them forward,” said SAMS social studies teacher Nathan West.

The bigger goal is preparing students for life beyond school. When students understand how they learn and feel confident in their abilities, they are better prepared for what comes next.



Nurturing BRILLIANCE

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Student Leadership, Connection and Impact

A snapshot of students making a difference in SANB and the broader community.



Maitreya Reeder Earns John Lewis Youth Leadership Award

SAVHS senior Maitreya Reeder has been named Minnesota's recipient of the John Lewis Youth Leadership Award, recognizing students who demonstrate outstanding leadership and a commitment to social justice. A passionate advocate for youth voting rights, Maitreya is making an impact in her community, and we are proud to celebrate her achievement.



Students Build Courage at Youth Frontiers Retreat

SAMS 7th graders took part in the Youth Frontiers Courage Retreat, a high-energy, day-long experience focused on building empathy, inclusion and a stronger school community. With support from 25 SAVHS student leaders, the day was filled with meaningful conversations, team-building, and fun.



Six Huskies Advance to State Speech Tournament

The SAVHS Speech Team delivered a standout performance at Section 4AA, with six Huskies — Gaby Jasiczek, Quinn Kaufman, Maitreya Reeder, Linden Phillip, Olive Schroeder, and Elsa Dungan-Hawks — advancing to the State Speech Tournament. The team earned runner-up honors, and Coach Joan Nelson was named Section 4AA Coach of the Year.

From SAVHS to Taiwan: Stian Sather's Journey



Stian Sather, an 11th grader at St. Anthony Village High School (SAVHS), has long been driven by a desire to learn, connect, and explore the world around him.

He began studying Mandarin Chinese at a young age while attending Yinghua Academy in Northeast Minneapolis. Now Stian extends his learning at SAVHS through Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) courses at Minneapolis College while continuing his Mandarin studies through an online AP Chinese course.

All of his hard work and dedication has paid off. This summer, Stian will study abroad in Taiwan as part of the U.S. Department of State's National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program. The highly competitive program allows students to immerse themselves in the culture while studying languages such as Chinese, Arabic, Russian, or Korean.

"I was ecstatic when I found out I was accepted into the program," Stian said. "It has always been a dream of mine to study abroad in Taiwan and immerse myself deeply into the language and culture there."

Stian is excited for the opportunity to study abroad, attend a university, live with a host family, and connect with other students from across the country. "This will be such an exciting adventure," he shared, "to be part of a cohort of American students while immersing in daily life in Taiwan."

His passion for language and connection is rooted in his family's story. Reflecting on his grandmother's experience as an Indonesian immigrant, Stian shared that learning another language can "unlock a whole new world of opportunities" and help build deeper understanding across cultures.

At SAVHS, Stian, whose name means "voyager" in Norwegian, has embraced numerous opportunities to grow both academically and personally, from participating in Youth in Government, where he argued a case at the State Capitol, to exploring interests in art, design, and photography.

Stian's educational journey reflects the district's strategic commitment to Dignity, ensuring every student gets what they need to thrive. Through personalized opportunities and supportive learning environments, students like Stian are empowered to pursue their passions and expand what they believe is possible.

"I'm just excited to use the skills I've learned in my education and put it toward a positive change in the world," Stian said.

To read Stian's full story, scan the QR code.



Stian Sather original artwork

With Gratitude

A message from Superintendent Renee Corneille



As I write this final column as superintendent of St. Anthony-New Brighton Schools, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude.

First and foremost, I thank our incredible students. They are, and always have been, the heart of this work. Their curiosity, resilience, and potential drive everything we do. It has been a privilege to serve a community committed to ensuring every SANB student has what they need to thrive.

I am also filled with gratitude for the people who make that possible every day. Our teachers and principals lead the way, creating meaningful, rigorous learning experiences. Equally important are our paraeducators, clerical staff, food service teams, custodians, and bus drivers, who provide the steady, behind-the-scenes support that keeps our schools running. Their care and commitment are the foundation of our system.

Throughout my tenure as superintendent, I have always held high expectations for myself and for our district. But high expectations must always be paired with strong support. That belief has guided our work to ensure teachers and principals can focus on what matters most: student learning. The intentional investments we have made in recent years, including adding coordinators and providing coaching for teachers and principals

in partnership with our union leadership, have helped advance that work. By strengthening our system, we are creating the conditions for transformative, student-centered learning.

I am also incredibly thankful for the School Board members who entrusted me with this role eight years ago and have continued to provide me steady guidance and support over the years. Their experience and long-standing commitment to this community have been invaluable.

Serving this community has been one of the greatest honors of my career. As a former history teacher, I have always believed that schools are not just places of learning, but communities where people grow, connect, and discover what's possible. That belief has been reaffirmed in SANB time and again.

As I step away at the end of June, I do so with confidence. St. Anthony-New Brighton is a strong, stable, and forward-focused district, well-positioned for continued success. Most importantly, I am confident in our future because of our students, and the adults who show up each day to support them.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this community.

With gratitude,

Renee



Amy Kalar Appointed to SANB School Board

At its May 5, 2026 meeting, the St. Anthony-New Brighton School Board swore in Amy Kalar to fill a vacant board seat. Kalar will serve the remainder of the term through December 31, 2027.

Following the resignation of Laurel Hood, the board initiated an application process open to the community. The board appointed Kalar on March 24 after reviewing submitted applications.

A district parent and community member, Kalar brings extensive governance and leadership experience. She previously served as President and Board Chair of both the Minnesota Architectural Foundation and the American Institute of

Architects (AIA) Minnesota, where she also advocated for gender equity and inclusion.

In her application, Kalar shared, "My commitment is to ensure people feel heard while keeping our focus on what matters most: the success and well-being of our students. When we ground our decisions in our shared values and communicate openly about how those decisions are made, we can move forward together as a community."

